Hoke County Natural Area Inventory

UPPER LUMBER RIVER MACROSITE

Upper Lumber River Macrosite is located along a 30-mile stretch of the river, extending from the bridge at Turnpike Road (SR 1412/1203 at the Scotland/Hoke County line) downstream to Bear Swamp. Included within the macrosite is the Lumber River/Bear Swamp Aquatic Habitat, which recognizes the ecological importance of this aquatic resource. Two Significant Natural Heritage Areas occur along the Hoke portion of the river: Lumber River/Chalk Banks Floodplain and Spring Branch Church Swamp. The Scotland County portion of Chalk Banks is a unit of Lumber River State Park, which has several other holdings within Robeson and Columbus Counties. In addition, the Lumber River is a state designated Natural and Scenic River which provides excellent blackwater river canoeing.

The Macrosite contains extensive blackwater river swamp forests, complete with small levees, frequently flooded depressions, small oxbows, sandbars, occasional high forested banks, and xeric fluvial ridges. It provides habitat for at least two rare bats, three rare fishes, one rare mayfly, two rare caddisflies, and five rare plants. The population of sarvis holly (*Ilex amelanchier*) begins well upstream on Drowning Creek and continues as scattered plants and clusters for the length of the Macrosite (including Hoke County); it is undoubtedly the state's largest occurrence. One Federal Species of Concern plant occurs in the Robeson County section: Carolina birds-in-a-nest (*Macbridea caroliniana,* also called Carolina bogmint); another occurs at Chalk Banks: Georgia indigo-bush (*Amorpha georgiana* var. *georgiana*). One of only four North Carolina populations of woody goldenrod (*Chrysoma pauciflosculosa*) occurs on a xeric sand ridge in the Robeson County section. The Cypress-Gum Swamp natural community contains many impressively large trees.

A disturbing sign is the recent and rapid expansion of alligator-weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*) in the lower portions of the river. This aggressive alien aquatic weed forms large dense monocultures and threatens to displace native vegetation. Its control should be a management priority.